

FAQ's

1) **When should I bring my child for his first dental checkup?**

Bring your child to the dentist soon after the first teeth begin to appear (especially if your water is not fluoridated or your child has been sleeping with a bottle).

By age 3-3 ½ your child should be seeing the dentist every 6 months for checkups and cleanings.

Regular dental checkups and cleanings should be fun for children. Don't wait for your child to develop a toothache before seeing a dentist.

2) **How can I avoid Baby Bottle Tooth Decay?**

If your child goes to sleep each night with a bottle of milk, juice, or sugared drink, it may cause a lot of very bad cavities. These cavities will rot away the teeth. Remember; do not put your baby to bed with a bottle.

Children who often fall asleep while nursing may also get a lot of cavities. Try not to let your baby sleep for long periods of time while nursing.

Toddlers who have a bottle in their mouths for long periods of time, day or night, are at great risk for *baby bottle tooth decay*.

Always clean your child's teeth after the bedtime bottle.

Try to have your child drinking all liquids from a cup by age one year.

3) **Does my child need fluoride?**

Make sure your child has enough of the mineral fluoride, which prevents cavities.

Ask your dentist or physician if you live in an area that has fluoride added to the water system. If your water does not contain enough natural fluoride to fight cavities, your dentist or physician can write a prescription for children.

If you have your own well in Frederick County, extra fluoride is also needed.

4) **How can I take care of my child's teeth?**

Begin cleaning your child's teeth as soon as the first tooth appears.

The most important time for you to clean your child's teeth is at bedtime.

Start with a washcloth or gauze and gently wipe the teeth. When a few teeth come in, switch to a soft toothbrush. Use only a speck of toothpaste.

Brush all sides of each tooth and be sure to brush the grooves of the back teeth.

Brush gently at the gum line on both the cheek and tongue sides of the tooth.

You must help your child brush his/her teeth until about age 7. Young children do not have the hand skills to do a good job on their own.

5) What about diet?

Avoid sticky sweets such as hard candy and lollipops, taffy and chewing gum unless it is sugarless.

Avoid sweet drinks such as soda, kool-aid or iced tea with sugar. Serve milk, water or fruit juices that don't contain added sugar.

Try to limit the number of different times each day that you eat or drink something containing sugar.

Remember, that honey and brown sugar will cause cavities also.

Beware of hidden sugars! Snack foods that contain carbohydrates (like potato chips) will produce sugar in the mouth after a time from the action of saliva.